

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (currently amended): A device for preventing spray from emerging from a wheel of a vehicle, the device comprising a ~~generally~~ planar linearly and vertically extending panel mounted ~~substantially~~ vertically behind a vehicle wheel and spaced therefrom for receiving on a first side water released by the wheel as it rotates, the panel including at least one passage which leads from the first side to a rear second side of the panel, the at least one passage being other than normal to the plane of the panel, and at least one vertically extending water-collecting pocket along a side of the at least one passage, wherein, in use, air and water entering the at least one passage are separated so that air passes through the at least one passage and mixes with ambient air on a second side of the panel, and water collects in the at least one water-collecting pocket.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The device as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the panel is formed from a plurality of vertically extending baffles positioned in a side by side relationship with passages therebetween.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The device as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the plurality of vertically extending baffles are substantially identical in shape.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The device as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the plurality of vertically extending baffles overlap one another.

Claim 5 (cancelled)

Claim 6 (previously presented): The device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the at least one passage is non-linear.

Claim 7 (previously presented): The device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the water-collecting pockets are arranged so as to collect water following a change of direction in the at least one passage.

Claim 8 (previously presented): The device as claimed in Claim 7, wherein the at least one or each passage has two changes of direction.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The device as claimed in claim 2, wherein the at least one pocket is a channel running substantially vertically along a respective baffle, so that, in use, water drains from the baffles onto a surface on which the wheel is travelling.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The device as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the channel is substantially U-shaped.

Claim 11 (cancelled)

Claim 12 (previously presented): The device as claimed in Claim 3, wherein the baffles overlap one another.

Claim 13 (previously presented): The device as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the panel is formed from a plurality of vertically extending baffles, the plurality of vertical baffles being extruded joined together in a side by side relationship by horizontally extending shafts supporting spacers between the baffles.

Claim 14 (currently amended): A method for preventing spray from emerging from a wheel of a vehicle, the method comprising:

providing a generally-linear and vertically extending planar panel for receiving on a first side water released by the wheel as it rotates, the panel including at least one vertically extending passage which leads from the first side to a rear second side of the panel, the at least one passage being other than normal to the plane of the panel, and at least one water-collecting pocket along a side of the at least one passage, wherein, in use, air and water entering the at least one passage are separated so that air passes through the at least one passage and mixes with ambient air on a second side of the panel, and water collects in the at least one water-collecting pocket; and

mounting the planar panel substantially vertically behind a vehicle wheel and spaced therefrom.

Claim 15 (new): A device for preventing spray from emerging from a wheel of a vehicle, said vehicle having a wheel arch extending over said wheel, the device comprising a planar linearly and vertically extending panel vertically behind and spaced from a vehicle wheel and below said wheel arch for receiving on a first side water released by the wheel as it rotates, the panel including at least one passage which leads from the first side to a rear second side of the panel, the at least one passage being other than normal to the plane of the panel, and at least one vertically extending water-collecting pocket along a side of the at least one passage, wherein, in use, air and water entering the at least one passage are separated so that air passes through the at least one passage and mixes with ambient air on a second side of the panel, and water collects in the at least one water-collecting pocket.

Claim 16 (new): A method for preventing spray from emerging from a wheel of a vehicle, said vehicle having a wheel arch extending over said wheel, the method comprising:

providing a linear and vertically extending planar panel for receiving on a first side water released by the wheel as it rotates, the panel including at least one vertically extending passage which leads from the first side to a rear second side of the panel, the at least one passage being other than normal to the plane of the panel, and at least one water-collecting pocket along a side of the at least one passage, wherein, in use, air and water entering the at least one passage are separated so that air passes through the at least one passage and mixes with ambient air on a second side of the panel, and water collects in the at least one water-collecting pocket; and

mounting the planar panel vertically behind and spaced from a vehicle wheel and below said wheel arch.